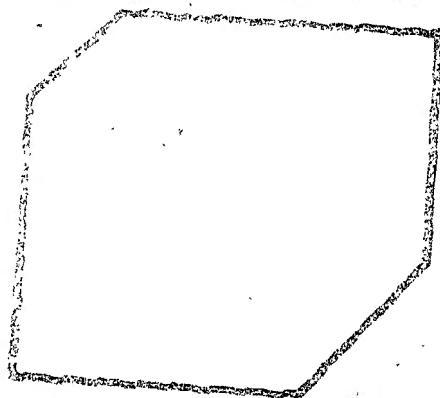


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“What is my Country? My Country is the Empire. Canada is my Home.”

IMPRESSIONS OF CANADA AND
THE NEW NORTH-WEST

BY

PERCY MACHELL, C.M.G.

LATE ADVISER TO THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR IN EGYPT.

JANUARY 1st, 1912.

LONDON: SIFTON, PRAED & CO., LTD.,
THE MAP-HOUSE, 67, ST. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.

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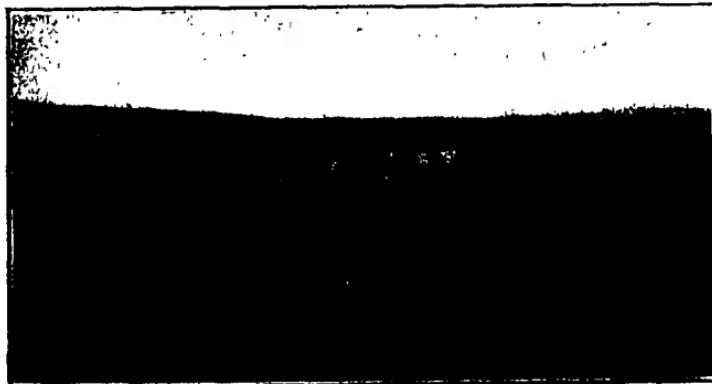
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Sept 15 1918

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John C. S. Co.
1910
Riga

“What is my Country? My Country is the Empire, — is my Home.”

“What is my country? My country is the Empire. Canada is my home.”

This is the way they put it in Canada, and this is the way it should be put in England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, N. Zealand, S. Africa, wherever our flag flies.

Lord Grey, whose home has been in Canada during the last seven years, and whose retirement, had not H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught come forward to take his place, would have been a calamity, considers that this “Slogan,” originally uttered by a Canadian Minister in the late Cabinet, should be posted in every school throughout the British Empire.

Here in England Canada is spoken of too frequently as if it were a small and uniform country, instead of a continent, the size of Europe, but with a population smaller than that of London.

It is impossible to describe Canada as a whole. What does a man from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or even Quebec or Montreal, know about the country which only begins at Winnipeg, half way across the total distance of over 3,000 miles?

What sort of a description of the Caspian and the Ural Mountains should we get from a traveller who has only visited Portugal?

To form an idea of Canada one must go there, spend some time there, visit many places, and endeavour to get in touch with all sorts and conditions of men. A circular tour from Montreal to Vancouver and back in a “drawing-room” or even an “observation” car is not enough.

“*Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt,*” wrote Horace, and now, 2,000 years later, we change the sky so easily that the process of attuning the mind to receive so many and such varied impressions has become difficult indeed.

Leaving England immediately after the Coronation I travelled as far as Quebec in the ship which carried Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Canadian contingent. My object was to see as much of Western Canada as was possible in the time, to form an idea as to the resources and the future of the country, and to endeavour to ascertain the points of view of all kinds of people.

The Premier and the troops disembarked at Quebec amid a scene of great enthusiasm, Canadians welcoming Sir Wilfrid not only as their own Prime Minister, but as the man whose view had prevailed in the Council of the Empire. "What Sir Wilfrid approved," they said, "went through." "What he disapproved was rejected." I was present when he arrived at Montreal, where a huge reception had been arranged. The town was decorated, great scrolls with "*Le Canada d'abord*," "*Canada first*," "*Le G.O.M. de Canada*," were hung across the streets and round the square in front of the City Hall.

After the official reception here the Premier was escorted by bands and vast crowds to the Place Viger Hotel, where speeches were delivered from the Terrace. Sir Wilfrid was tired and said only a few words, but the enthusiasm of the crowd, which was almost entirely French, was remarkable.

This was on the 11th July, and no one who was present that day could have conceived the possibility of the *débâcle* which was to come.

It appeared to me that though the people of Montreal were French to a greater extent than I had imagined, their sympathies were purely Canadian. "*Le Canada d'abord*," "*Imperium et libertas*," everything indicated a consuming desire to become a mighty nation within the Empire. French and English naturally keep a good deal to themselves, but both alike are *Canadians*, a people possessed by a firm determination to work out the destiny of their country in their own way, and without the smallest notion of being annexed by anyone.

The Canadian Government is so completely decentralised, from the city or township through the province to the Dominion, that to the ordinary man in the street, the Empire seems almost an abstraction. He takes it for granted. It is a *fait accompli*, while his own country is still in the making. So, when he sings "*O Canada*" more frequently than "*God save the King*," the Englishman who does not understand, asks, "Is he loyal?"

As a matter of fact the Englishman and the Canadian often fail to understand each other because, like brothers, they are too much alike. When the Englishman becomes a Canadian he changes his sky, his atmosphere, but not his mind. For better or worse the Anglo-Saxon bedrock of his mentality remains unchanged. The man fresh out from England finds what appears on the surface to be practically an American, and the Canadian scoffs at the old world ways of the Englishman. Both are apt to be equally cocksure, and, while each is busy explaining to the other the folly of his methods, neither succeeds in carrying conviction.

Starting from Montreal I proceeded slowly *via* Toronto to

Owen Sound, and across the lakes to Port Arthur, en route for Winnipeg, the "Neck of the bottle," or the "Gateway of the West." From Winnipeg I went to Saskatoon, to Edmonton, to Calgary, and Kamloops, making expeditions from various places *en route*. From Kamloops I went to Vancouver, across to Victoria, and finally I took a steamer, after a few days' fishing on the Campbell River in the northern part of Vancouver Island, for Prince Rupert, the magnificent harbour of the terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, some 500 miles due north of Vancouver, the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. From Prince Rupert I proceeded for a hundred miles up the Skeena River, as far as the end of the steel, and then I slowly worked my way back to Edmonton.

Day after day on the trains, on steamers, in hotels, in clubs, in business offices, on farms, and in factories, I asked and listened. Sometimes foregathering with men to whom I had letters of introduction, but usually with strangers, men with whom a few weeks earlier one might have imagined that one had little or nothing in common. Everyone, however, is kind to the Englishman who wants to learn, and the enthusiasm of the West is infectious.

THE CANADIAN "BOOM."

Here in London we are told that the people in Canada are crazy. We are reminded of the rubber boom, and we are assured that a crash is imminent. The opinions of the men who warn us are not usually to be disregarded, but can anyone who has not actually seen what is taking place form any conception of it? Over on the other side they say, "America last century; Canada this." The Americans have seen the Western States grow up, the Canadians themselves have witnessed the rise of Winnipeg, Vancouver, and all the intermediate towns, simultaneously with the cultivation of the soil, and it simply is not possible for them to doubt that the development of the North-West is assured.

Long-headed American farmers are selling their property in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and other States at big figures, and coming across to take up far better land at about one-tenth of the price at which they sold their own. Some of them do not even buy, but are content to take up free Government homesteads, and, with ample capital and experience, get straight to work under conditions which are almost precisely similar to those under which they worked before. These Americans and a number of Canadians who migrated to the States some fifteen to twenty years ago, and are now returning as fast as they can, are the finest settlers of all, and these are the men

who have done more than any to assure the future of the West. They begin with capital, experience, and an infinite capacity for endurance and hard work. They shoe their own horses, build their own houses, and are independent of outside aid. No less than 145,000 Americans have immigrated into Canada this year. In August alone 17,019 came over from the United States, against 10,490 in August, 1910. In 1910 the total number was 121,000, and in 1909, 59,000.

In the years 1907-8-9, more than 78 per cent. of these American immigrants into Canada were farmers or farm labourers with their families, while less than 23 per cent. of all other immigrants to Canada during the same period were of these classes. The descendants of the men who made their homes in the midst of hostile Indians will not hesitate to cross an imaginary line and reap the harvests which are awaiting them in the new North-West.

The Canadian "boom" is a boom with a bottom in it. It is based upon the quality and the quantity of the wheat which is produced as fast as the land can be brought under cultivation. The world's demand for wheat is increasing. The exports of the United States are less than half of what they were ten years ago, while those of Canada have more than doubled, and the world is now relying upon an ever increasing influx of cultivators into the Canadian North-West to solve the problem. The finest land in the world is waiting to be scratched; there is enough to occupy hundreds of thousands of immigrants, and the quality of this northern wheat is beyond dispute. Temporary set-backs there may be, and perhaps must be, now in one district and now in another, owing sometimes to partial failures of the crops,*

*The following figures are from the Report of the Department of Trade and Commerce for the fiscal year ending 1910:—

WHEAT. Total production—bushels.				Exports from Canada to the U. Kingdom.
Year.	Alberta.	Canada.	U. Kingdom	
1906	3,996,020	128,000,000	62,481,000	—
1907	4,194,535	92,662,753	58,275,000	—
1908	7,094,925	128,647,876	55,585,000	44,133,158
1909	8,250,000	166,744,000	63,197,000	46,920,335
1910	7,904,520	149,990,000	58,235,000	48,466,664

and sometimes perhaps to over speculation in land values, but it is impossible to conceive a permanent set-back all over Western Canada.

The optimism of the people is as infectious as it is remarkable. It is not a country of experts; the difficulties of persons whose businesses require them to employ assistants are great, for these assistants, being practically amateurs, are naturally somewhat inefficient, and also the greatest tact is needed lest they "quit." Though everyone appears to be a handy-man, few can be said to be specialists. No one dreams of accepting a subordinate position as a permanency. The clerks in the banks and business houses or lawyer's offices, are only passing through, and are landowners and holders of stocks and shares besides. The barbers, the hotel porters, even the "shoe-shines" own town lots, and talk real estate. They cannot all be millionaires, but all intend to try, and the opportunity at any rate is there. "In the old country," they say, "everyone seems to be trying to pull down; here we try to pull up."

THE ELECTIONS.

The system of decentralisation of Government seems to develop the sense of citizenship in Canada. Every man, however obscure his position at the moment may be, is aware that his vote is as good as that of any other. "Carpet-baggers" are not understood, and a candidate must be a local man deliberately selected by the majority of his fellow-citizens, to whom he recognises his responsibility. One heard of "graft" at times, and I tried to gauge the feelings on this subject. "Well you see," someone explained, "they are all busy men, and we cannot expect them to do it for nothing. As long as the machine turns out good work, we must not mind a reasonable number of private axes being ground upon the Government grindstone." In Western Canada, where there is no tradition, there cannot be much prejudice, as in England, where "Yaller for ivver; put Blue in the river!" appeared to epitomise the political thought of the voters in a certain rural district at the last General Election.

There was a considerable divergence of opinion on the subject of the Reciprocity proposals, on which the last election in Canada was practically fought. The farmers in the West believed that it could do no harm and might do them some good to have another market for their grain, and they also wished to get their machinery as cheap as possible, so they voted for what they believed to be their own interests. Others, who did not farm, saw that if Canadian manufacturers were no longer to be protected in their infancy by a tariff of at least 33 per cent.,

there would probably be farming in Canada for the benefit largely of the United States, and very little else. During the last five or six years 250 million dollars have been invested by American manufacturers in branch factories in Canada.

In Ontario the general feeling of resentment took the form of a great outburst of Imperialism, which resulted in the election of seventy-three Conservatives and only thirteen Liberals.

In old-fashioned French Quebec the Nationalists under Henri Bourassa, who are really so confident of the supremacy of John Bull upon the sea as to be convinced that any kind of naval scheme for Canada is futile, succeeded in presenting Sir Wilfrid Laurier to the simple inhabitants as a monster whose Imperial bias would allow him to stop at nothing short of a gigantic navy which would rob them of their sons, and carry them away to give the best years of their lives to fighting England's battles across the seas.

And the unfortunate Premier found himself refused admittance to houses in this, his own province. "*Mais non, Monsieur Laurier !*" exclaimed the sturdy French peasant woman, "*c'est trop fort ! On va nous arracher les enfants, les garder pendant des années ? Jamais de la vie !*"* And whereas eleven seats were held by the Conservatives in the last Parliament out of a total of 65, to-day the Liberal members from Quebec number only 36. Moreover, no less than seven of the thirteen Ministers who offered themselves for re-election have been defeated.

The great bulk, however, of the silent voters throughout the country, realising their marvellous prosperity, and seeing how anxious the Americans were to conclude the deal, were of opinion that this was not the moment to take such an important step, practically in the dark. "*Why change ?*" they asked. "*If we wait, the Americans appear to want our wheat and our pulp so badly that later on they will either offer better terms or let in our raw materials free.*"

So, between the great manifestations of the manufacturers in Ontario and the East, the tricks of the Nationalists in Quebec, perhaps the anxiety of the Roman Catholic Church, which has nothing to gain from closer connection with the States, and the sound common-sense of the masses, who did not always understand the proposition but had got what is called "cold feet," Reciprocity was killed by a total majority of 43,383 votes. "*Canada has done her part, and it is up to the old country now.*"

Having completed my preliminary survey of the country from east to west I became almost as optimistic as the Canadians

*"*No, M. Laurier, this is too much ! You are going to carry off our children and keep them for years ? Never !*"

themselves, and my difficulty was to choose any one locality which appeared to be better than the rest. I wished to select a place which would serve as my headquarters, to which I could come when it was possible, where I could make a few investments, and grow up with the country. Finally my choice fell upon Edmonton, and I devoted the remainder of my time to the study of the resources of this rising city, and of the vast Peace River district to the north.

A RISING CITY.

I had scarcely heard of Edmonton six months ago, and I have not the smallest doubt that settlers could do as well elsewhere. I merely propose to set down what I saw, and to record the conclusions at which I arrived for the benefit of any who may think it worth their while to go and see for themselves.

The province of Alberta, of which Edmonton is the capital, covers an area of 253,540 square miles, being more than twice the size of Great Britain and Ireland, and rather larger than Austria-Hungary. The total area is 162,755,200 acres, of which 1,510,400 acres are water, leaving 160,755,200 acres of dry land. Allowing sixty million acres for the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and other rough ground, one hundred million acres remain available for settlement.

At the present time only a little over one per cent. of the arable land has been brought under cultivation.

According to the latest census the population of Alberta is 372,919, an increase of 411 per cent. since 1906, and that of Edmonton 24,882, against 11,167 in 1906, and 2,652 in 1901, or nearly 1,000 per cent. in the last ten years.

General Sir William Butler in "The Great Lone Land," written in 1872, thus describes his arrival at Edmonton: "As we journeyed on towards Edmonton the country maintained its rich, beautiful appearance, and the weather continued fine and mild. Everywhere Nature had written in unmistakable characters the story of the fertility of the soil over which we rode; everywhere the eye looked upon panoramas filled with the beauty of lake and winding river, and grassy slope and undulating woodland. The whole face of the country was indeed one vast park. For two days we passed through this beautiful land, and on the evening of the 26th November drew near to Edmonton. . . . Edmonton, the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company's Saskatchewan trade, and the residence of a chief factor of the Corporation, is a large, five-sided fort, with the usual flanking bastions and high stockades. . . . To recount the deeds of blood enacted round the wooden walls of Edmonton would be to fill a volume. Edmonton and Fort Pitt

both stand within the war country of the Crees and Blackfeet, and are consequently the scenes of many conflicts between these fierce and implacable enemies."

Forty years later the first glimpse of Edmonton, no longer a stockaded fort, surrounded by bloodthirsty savages, but a splendid city, evoked expressions of an admiration which is justified by subsequent investigation. And Edmonton does not owe her existence to a chance. Long years ago the buffalo made their trails along the best and easiest routes, and the hunters, again, chose the easiest routes for transporting their skins to the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, which experience had proved to be the *natural* bases for collection and distribution. Edmonton was *naturally* the great trading base of the old North-West; where the hunters made their trails the Government is now projecting railways, and, while every one of the old Hudson's Bay posts is destined to become a city, Edmonton, the old headquarters of the Hudson's Bay, will become the mighty metropolis of the new North-West.

Standing at an altitude of 2,200 feet upon the banks of the beautiful wooded valley of the Saskatchewan River, which provides an unrivalled water supply, this town, whose municipal motto is "Industry, Energy and Enterprise," boasts Government and other buildings which speak for themselves.

On the south side of the river stands the Alberta University, and opposite are the magnificent new Parliament buildings, which would be an ornament to any great city in Europe.

Post office, court house, up-to-date fire brigade stations, numerous large hotels and more than fifteen banks, the clearing house totals of which amount to more than £200,000 a week,* large pork-packing plants and numerous imposing stores all appeal to the imagination of the new arrival, and stimulate his curiosity to ascertain the reasons which have induced the hard-headed Canadians to spend their money on such a scale. The first thing that struck me as I drove to my hotel was that these people evidently mean business, and the more I saw the more I was convinced of this, and that they are right.

The streets and avenues in the business portion of the town are wide, with broad-paved side walks and asphalted roadway, a double line of electric street cars running down the principal thoroughfares. The corner of Jasper Avenue and First Street is the commercial centre of the town, and land has recently been sold here as high as 2,330 dollars a front foot.

*Edmonton's bank clearings for November, 1911, were 10 per cent. higher than for any previous month, and exceeded the clearings for November, 1910, by 77 per cent.

Extensive tracts of land, many miles beyond the city limits, are already laid out in lots as prospective building sites, and this is where it seems that there must be disappointment. The town undoubtedly is growing fast, and it is not easy to foresee the extent of its ultimate development, but, after all, Edmonton can scarcely become as big as London! There must be a limit, and it seems possible that owners of distant outside land which is being held for sale as building sites may have to wait some time before their hopes can be realised. Already the electric cars are running to a reasonable distance in various directions, and attractive residences are springing up as fast as the services of bricklayers and carpenters can be obtained. Without the smallest doubt these *adjacent* suburbs provide a sound investment, for notwithstanding the rate at which residences are being produced, not a house is ever standing to be let. Anything will be *sold* at a price, and the faster houses are run up the faster more appear to be required. As for business premises inside the town, every one is let for a term of years practically before the foundations are dug.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company has purchased a site overlooking the river and facing the club, with a frontage of 400 feet on MacDougall Avenue, on which arrangements have been made to construct a palatial hotel at a cost of about one million dollars. And the necessity of this new hotel is urgent already, for the King Edward, the Royal George, the Cecil and others, throughout the summer at any rate, are filled to overflowing.

The hotels are full, not a house to be had, and no trans-continental railway as yet passing through the town!

WHAT THE RAILWAYS ARE DOING.

Yet it is the railways that have made Canada. In 1910 there were 24,731 miles of railway in operation, against 21,429 miles in 1906. The nett profits of the three great companies for September exceeded those of the corresponding month last year by no less than 1,520,296 dollars. But the big development has yet to come, for the Canadian Pacific, which is the only trans-continental line at present, leaves Edmonton 200 miles away to the north, connecting until recently by means of a single line from Calgary to Strathcona on the southern side of the Saskatchewan River, whence passengers and traffic are still conveyed along a road which it appears to have been nobody's business to repair, a distance of some two and half miles into Edmonton.

The new Canadian Pacific Railway branch from Winnipeg to Strathcona *via* Witaskiwin and Saskatoon, which was opened

this year, is over 200 miles shorter than the Calgary route, and the journey can now be accomplished in thirty-five hours.

A high level bridge, however, costing some 2,000,000 dollars is actually being constructed by the Canadian Pacific across the river, and as soon as this is finished their trains will run from Calgary on the main line and from Winnipeg *via* Saskatoon and Witaskiwin to Edmonton direct. No one supposes that the Canadian Pacific will stop here, and certainly nothing could be more improbable than that the pioneer railway company of Western Canada will allow itself to be left behind in the race for the last North West. In a year or eighteen months at any rate, Canadian Pacific trains will run direct, from Calgary in the south and Winnipeg in the east, to a station in the heart of Edmonton.

The two great trans-continental railways of the future, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific, which already have stations at Edmonton, and large sections of their lines already in operation, will, in two years time, be running from sea to sea.

The Canadian Pacific undoubtedly made good terms with the Government. The company received \$25,000,000 cash, 25,000,000 acres of land, 614 miles of constructed road, besides surveys of the whole line.

They were granted exemption from all import duty upon everything required for construction and from land taxes. In addition to this, they had no competition; they were free to charge whatever rates the Railway Commission would permit. On the top of all a loan of 30,000,000 dollars was asked for, obtained, and repaid in full. On the other hand the Canadian Pacific has *made* the West; and the demands of the vast area to the north of their main line to-day afford the most eloquent testimony to the success of their enterprise.

As regards the future and the "last best West" the Canadian Pacific undoubtedly has no intention of resigning in favour of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern Lines.

If these two companies have not been able to make such advantageous terms with the Government as the Canadian Pacific, it must be remembered that the conditions are wholly different. Anything that has been done in Canada west of Ontario is thanks originally to the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose disadvantages then were quite as great as her advantages to-day. The Canadian Pacific Railway east of Winnipeg traverses such an unproductive country that from North Bay to Port Arthur and from Thunder Bay to Lake of the Woods there is practically no local traffic, and the construction of the line through the Rocky Mountains, while perhaps unequalled as an engineering feat, included an ascent of over 23,000 feet

instead of something under 7,000 in the case of the Grand Trunk Pacific Company. The eastern section of this railway from Moncton, the terminus in New Brunswick, to Winnipeg, which is being built by the Dominion Government and leased to the Grand Trunk Pacific, passes through country incomparably superior to that selected by the Canadian Pacific Railway, with a maximum gradient of 31 feet to the mile west bound, and only 21 feet to the mile east bound; while the Western Section, which is being built by the Company, with a Government guarantee of 75 per cent. of the bonds, has a maximum gradient west bound of 26, and east bound 21 feet to the mile, compared with 116 feet to the mile either way on the Canadian Pacific.

The total length of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway from Moncton to Prince Rupert is 3,556 miles, of which the following has now been completed:—

Moncton to Quebec Bridge	...	403
Quebec Bridge to West	...	243
Cochrane, to East	...	110
" West	...	128
Superior Junction, to East	...	78
" " " Winnipeg	246	

A total of 1,208 out of 1,804 miles east of Winnipeg.

From Winnipeg west trains are operating *via* Edmonton to Fitzhugh, a distance of 1,028 miles, and the latest news is to the effect that the line has been completed as far as the Great Divide, the highest point to be touched in the Rocky Mountains. From Prince Rupert on the Pacific coast, grading has been completed as far as Hazelton, a distance of 180 miles, and a daily service of trains is already running to a point about 100 miles up the Skeena River.

From Prince Rupert to Quebec the maximum gradient on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway is six-tenths of one per cent. east of Winnipeg, and five-tenths of one per cent. per mile west against a maximum of two and two-tenths per mile on the Canadian Pacific.

It is claimed that the G.T.P. will run two trains for every one of the Canadian Pacific, and the effect upon the rates for freight may be imagined.

For the farmers, not only an unlimited market, but greatly reduced rates will be the immediate result of the opening of this new trans-continental railway, which will have at Prince Rupert its terminus, 550 miles north of Vancouver, and 480 miles nearer Yokohama than this city, docks and quays and one of the finest harbours in the world.

A NEW SEAPORT.

The men who chose Prince Rupert knew what they were doing. The harbour, which is thoroughly sheltered and easily accessible at all times, is over twelve miles long and 2,000 feet wide in the narrowest part. The site of the town is magnificent, sloping back gradually from the water half a mile to two or three miles towards the hills, but the task of construction would have struck terror to the hearts of men less competent than the founders.

A dense forest covered ledges and precipices of alternate rock and deep mossy swamps, known as "muskeg." Alternate flint and apparently abysmal morasses saturated with the rainfall of ages, and protected by the forest through which the rays of the sun had never penetrated.

But the plans having been prepared and the trees cleared streets and avenues were quickly blasted out of the rock, and light tramways poured the loosened flint into the rapidly drying holes.

Prince Rupert was incorporated as a Municipality by Act of the Provincial Legislature on the 10th March, 1910.

Temporary plank roads and side walks are now being replaced by permanent grades, and a certain number of permanent buildings, including an immense cold storage station, costing a million and a half dollars, have already been constructed. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company is about to commence the erection of a hotel, somewhat similar to the Chateau Laurier at Ottawa, which is to cost 975,000 dollars, and which is expected to be ready early in 1914.

Prince Rupert is the natural base for the splendid salmon, halibut, cod, herring and other fisheries, which, for obvious reasons, are still in their infancy. Within two years, however, a constant supply of the finest fish in the world will be run from the door of this great cold storage depot direct to Winnipeg in less time than steamers could convey it to Vancouver.

A telegram just received by the High Commissioner states that 432 whales, some of them weighing 80 tons, have been taken this season on the Queen Charlotte grounds, opposite Prince Rupert.

A dry dock, 600 feet by 80 feet, is in process of construction in connection with the harbour, which is 400 miles nearer Yokohama and 500 miles nearer Alaska than Vancouver.

Passengers from Montreal or New York to Alaska will save forty-eight hours *via* Prince Rupert, and it is claimed that a traveller from Liverpool *via* Quebec, Prince Rupert, Yokohama and Vladivostock, will be able to circle the globe in three days

less time than would be possible by any other route.

Nothing is more striking than the way in which the terminus city has been selected, planned and laid out with regard to future requirements. There has been no hustle, no rush of undesirable settlers, but out of the forest, rock and muskeg is being evolved what is already a town of over 5,000 inhabitants, and will shortly be a mighty port, the junction between east and west on the shortest route round the world.

Edmonton is plainly beholden to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company not only directly, but also indirectly for the impetus given to the Canadian Pacific Railway to come and compete for the trade of the new north-west.

And the Canadian Northern has not been idle.

The total length of railway owned, leased and operated by this company west of Port Arthur on the 30th June, 1911, was 3,731 miles, an increase of about 300 per cent. in nine years; over 400 miles of newly constructed tracks having been added to the system during the year.

In the ninth annual report of the directors, submitted at the general meeting at Toronto on the 14th of October, 1911, the president states:—

"The past year is notable for the commercial expansion of the Dominion generally, and the progress of development within the Prairie provinces in particular. New records have been established for influx of immigration and capital. It is perhaps in the Prairie provinces that the greatest measure of progress is evidenced. This is reflected in the expansion of such commercial centres as Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, and Prince Albert. The growth of these cities, being a concomitant of the settlement of the vast areas tributary to them, naturally received great stimulus from the gratifying increase of immigration during the year.

"The Government authorities announce that during the fiscal year 1910-11 the increase in population from immigration was 311,084.* It is a matter of official record that over seven million acres of homestead lands were entered upon by these new settlers during the year, and this in addition to the large areas of lands sold by the Government and other agencies."

Hitherto the eastern terminus of the Canadian Northern Railway has been at Port Arthur, on Lake Superior; but during the last six or seven years a number of smaller systems in the east have been acquired and amalgamated into the

*The High Commissioner for Canada has announced, at the end of December, that the total immigration into Canada during 1911, amounts to over 350,000.

C. N. Ontario Railway, the C. N. Quebec Company, and the Halifax and S.W. Railway Company, with a total length in actual operation amounting to 2,000 miles, all under the direction of the President and Vice-President of the Canadian Northern Railway. A portion of the trans-continental line of the future already operates between Quebec, Montreal and Toronto, and in May last the Dominion Government agreed to facilitate the construction, and to guarantee the financing of a line between Montreal and Hawkesbury, and from Ottawa to Port Arthur. This arrangement, together with a similar contract entered into last year with the Government of British Columbia, assures the completion of the project for the establishment of a third trans-continental service. 1752 miles of the Canadian Northern Railway are already operating in the province of Manitoba, 1,312 miles in Saskatchewan, which province alone produced in 1910 72,666,000 bushels of wheat, or fourteen million bushels more than was produced in Great Britain altogether, and 221 miles in Alberta.

From Winnipeg west, trains are running regularly as far as Edmonton. From Saskatoon three-quarters of the line to Calgary are completed, and the remainder is under construction. The main line to Edmonton is tapped at Vegreville by one already operating between that junction and a point on the new Saskatoon-Calgary line. From N. Battleford a line runs northwest towards Athabasca landing, a distance of some 250 miles, of which sixty miles are already operating. From Edmonton four lines of the Canadian Northern branch east, north, northwest, and west. The fourth is the extension of the first, or main line from the east, which is already operating as far as Stonyplain, and construction is being continued in a direction a little south of west towards the Rocky Mountains, whence the left bank of the North Thompson River is generally followed nearly south to Kamloops, then due west to Ashcroft, and along the valley of the Fraser to Port Mann on the opposite side of the river to New Westminister, a suburb of Vancouver. The latest information is to the effect that the chief engineer of the Canadian Northern Railway has succeeded in obtaining a grade of less than seven-tenths of one per cent. over the most difficult section of the entire road.

The northern branch from Edmonton to Athabasca landing is nearly finished, and the north-west line is being constructed in the direction of Grand Prairie.

As I write, I learn that on the 6th December, 1911, Mr. Sifton, the Premier of Alberta, has submitted to the Legislative Assembly of the Province the details of the Government's railway policy already referred to in general terms in the speech from the throne.

The following are the proposals:—

RAILWAYS PROPOSED BY PREMIER SIFTON.

1. From Edmonton to Grande Prairie.
2. From Athabasca Landing to Peace River Crossing.
3. From Athabasca Landing to Fort McMurray, with branch to Lac la Biche.
4. From Edmonton around the north shore of the Saskatchewan River to a point on the eastern boundary of the province in the vicinity of Cold Lake.
5. From Bruderheim running east and north of the C.N.R. main line to range 5, and then to the southern boundary of the province between ranges 5 and 6.
6. A continuation of the Peace River line and the line already arranged for between Camrose and Strathcona down to the eastern boundary of the province to meet the line coming up from Regina and Winnipeg, thus making the shortest line between the three capitals of the three provinces, continued on to the Grande Prairie.
7. A line from Strathcona running just south of the Saskatchewan River to a point seventeen or eighteen miles west of the C. & E. Railway, thence south to the neighbourhood of Pincher Creek at an average distance of three townships west of the C. & E. Railway.
8. A line from the Stettler-Brazeau line, starting from a point eighteen miles east of the C. & E. Railway, and running south to meet the Goose Lake line into Calgary at a point near Swallowvale, north of the main line of the C.P.R.

This programme is far more extensive than had contemplated, and furnishes yet another overwhelming proof of the confidence of the Government.

The proposals provide for 2,300 miles of new line spread over the province of Alberta, from the Peace and the Athabasca Rivers to the United States boundary.

Under the terms of the charters which it is proposed to grant, the companies must commence the construction of all the new railways within two years, and must complete the work within a period of five years from the date of granting the charters.

Though I am not in a position to state the exact distribution of these charters, it seems certain that Projects Nos. 1, 2 and 3 will be assumed by the Canadian Northern, while it is immaterial to the public which of the three great companies undertakes the rest.

Having briefly indicated the means by which the three great railroad companies, assisted by the Government, are preparing to develop the resources of the New North-West, I will now endeavour to give some account of the country between Edmonton

and the Peace River, some 300 miles north, and beyond.

PEACELAND

Edmonton always has been and obviously always must be the distributing centre for all this area, as well as for the district south and east, which is already becoming one vast farm. The three great railway companies which are straining every nerve to be ready to deal with the problem of transportation, have not been oblivious of the fact that Edmonton, besides her geographical and other advantages, is built upon a vast stratum of high grade lignite coal. Government reports place the area of this coal bed at nearly 11,000 square miles, with an estimated quantity of 60,000 millions of tons.

Sixty miles west of Edmonton, on the track of the Canadian Northern Railway, towards the foothills of the Rockies, are immense deposits of coal which have hitherto been scarcely touched, and from the Morinville mines, twenty miles north, this same company has been transporting 100,000 tons a month.

An examination of the map showed me that some three-quarters of the province of Alberta lies north of where all railroads end. Everyone knows the value of the land round Edmonton and south, but I wished to go and see for myself what the nearer north country was really like. I had heard that the wheat which obtained first prize at the World's Centennial Exhibition was grown at Fort Chippewyan on Lake Athabaska, and that splendid flour—sufficient for all local requirements—is grown at Fort Vermilion on the Peace River, north of latitude 58, so I decided to devote a month, which was all the time I could spare, to a trip to the Peace River country for the purpose of satisfying myself as to its future possibilities.

CLIMATE.

The bugbear of Canada is supposed to be its climate, which undoubtedly is rigorous in these regions. But rigorous is one thing and intolerable another. When the thermometer registers extremes of 50 and 60 below zero there is no wind, there is bright sunshine, and the cold is not nearly so much felt as when there are only a few degrees accompanied by wind and sleet. Moreover, it is erroneous to suppose that at places two or three hundred miles north it is necessarily colder than in districts the same distance to the south.

Take Calgary, Edmonton, and Dunvegan, for example.

At Edmonton, the mean average temperature in June is 57.1; at Calgary, 200 miles south, it is 55.3; and at Dunvegan, 200 miles north of Edmonton, it is 56.5. In July, Edmonton

shows 61.2; Calgary, 60.6; Dunvegan, 61.3; and in August, Edmonton, 59.1; Calgary, 57.5; Dunvegan, 57.4. The greatest heat ever recorded in July has been 94 at Edmonton, 95 at Calgary, and 93 at Dunvegan, and the greatest cold recorded during the month of February has been -57 at Edmonton; only -55 at Dunvegan, 200 miles north; and -49 at Calgary, 200 miles south of Edmonton. To quote from the Government handbook:

"(1). There is one common flora extending from the International Boundary northwards to Lake Athabasca and the Peace River, and as that flora requires a high summer temperature for its existence, it indicates an even distribution of heat throughout the district during the summer months. This fact places the northern districts of Alberta, the prairies of the Peace River district, and the lands along the Athabasca in the same class, as far as grain culture is concerned, as those lands in the vicinity of Winnipeg, Regina or Calgary.

"(2). The production of cereal crops depends entirely upon summer temperatures and summer conditions of climate.

"(3). The rainfall during the year is distributed so as best to promote vegetation in the growing season. Rains usually come when they are wanted and cease when vegetation no longer requires them, and when their continuance would be detrimental to the harvesting of the crops.* The period of greatest rainfall embraces May, June, July and part of August. The latter half of August and September are dry, and ideal harvest weather prevails.

"(4). The long hours of sunshine in the summer months promote steady and rapid growth, and really secure a longer period of actual tissue building in the growing plants than is found in lower latitudes. From the 1st of June to the 1st of August there are but about two hours of darkness in the more northerly districts."

The "Chinooks" or warm winds which blow from the Rocky Mountains exercise an important effect upon the climate of Alberta, and perhaps are chiefly responsible for the surprising variations in temperature which so often occur.

There appears to be plenty of rain in Central and Northern Alberta. This year, as I have stated, during September there was more than was required. The annual precipitation for seven years 1903-1904 recorded at Edmonton, is as follows:

Seeding Season.—January, 0.96; February, 0.55; Mar., 0.86; April, 0.63;

Growing Season.—May, 1.74; June, 3.97; July, 3.00;

*This year it was the prolongation of the rains that prevented the crop from being a record in quality as well as quantity.
August, 2.21.

Harvesting and Threshing.—September, 1.05; October, 1.02; November, 0.92; December, 0.57. An average for the year of 17.48 inches. Snow often falls early in autumn, but does not lie until the beginning of December, when it remains until the beginning of April.

EDMONTON TO THE LESSER SLAVE LAKE.

When I left Edmonton for the north on the 5th September, with a friend, Captain Allan Palmer, who was travelling to see the country, like myself, the crops were fit to cut, and in many cases were already in the stooks; but the rain was heavier than usual this summer, and the harvest was late. The crops on both sides of the road presented a grand appearance as we drove along on the stage coach, and it was evident that, if only the rain would continue to hold off, the harvest would be a record. To-day it was gloriously fine. There was no dust, and with a good team we jogged along as far as a stopping house, about twenty-five miles on the road, where we had our mid-day meal and changed horses. An hour later we were on the road again, and soon after sunset pulled up for the night at "Eggies'," about 52 miles from Edmonton, and about half way to Athabaska Landing. Here there was a considerable crowd, as the occupants of our three "rigs," going north and those of two others coming south all met and required accommodation at the same time.

As far as Eggies' the land had been of the best, and a considerable area was under cultivation, but on leaving Eggies' next morning at 7.30 a.m., after a shake-down on the floor and a very in moderate supper and breakfast, the good land was no longer universal. We passed through a certain amount of scrub, with a light growth of poplars and jack pine growing on sandy soil; as the pea vine seems to indicate the best, so the jack pine advertises inferior country.

At midday we changed horses and had our meal at a stopping house owned by Mr. Davis, a Yorkshirer who has worked up a fine farm here, while his wife attends to the requirements of travellers who stop for a single meal or for the night.

With the exception of Davis' farm, the country we passed through did not seem to be of first rate quality, but several patches of cultivation were noticed, and the appearance of all the crops was excellent.

Again we were lucky in having a splendid day, and we arrived at Athabaska Landing about 7:15 p.m.

The branch of the Canadian Northern Railway which by the spring of 1912 should be in operation between Edmonton and

Athabaska Landing, lies chiefly west of the road. It is being constructed in sections, and I hope to make my next journey in four or five hours instead of two whole days. "The Landing" is becoming a busy place. Besides the old-established Hudson's Bay and Revillon's Stores, a number of others, including the new "Peace River Trading and Land Co." are already operating; a large hotel belonging to the Northern Transportation Company, which owns the steamers on the Athabaska River and the Lesser Slave Lake, provides a certain amount of accommodation and unlimited whiskey for the travellers who usually seem condemned to arrive just in time to be too late for the bi-weekly steamer service north, and for the stage for the south.

The Hudson's Bay and other companies conduct fleets of scows laden with supplies destined for the Peace as far as Fort Vermilion, and down the Athabaska to Fort McMurray and the Roman Catholic Mission on Lake Athabaska.

When the newly proposed extension of the railway from Athabaska Landing to Fort McMurray, with a branch to Lake La Biche, is carried out, a powerful impetus will be given to the development of the asphalt, oil, and other resources of the Athabaska River, while the extension of the railway from the Landing to Peace River Crossing will accomplish in the space of a few years what could not otherwise have taken less than two or three generations.

North of the fifty-fifth degree of latitude all alcoholic liquors are strictly prohibited, and the Royal North-West Mounted Police, whose divisional headquarters are here, see that none goes through.

The Northern Transportation Company's hotel has the only liquor licence north of Edmonton, nothing of any kind being allowed beyond this point without a special permit signed by the Attorney General of Alberta, which is very sparingly bestowed.

The President of the Northern Transportation Company is Mr. James Cornwall, a Liberal politician, and a well-known local business man, who is member for the Peace River District in the Alberta Provincial Parliament. Mr. Cornwall was at the landing the day I was there, having made his way from Edmonton in a motor in seven hours. Springs had broken and various mishaps occurred, but they got through and two days later accomplished the return journey. His manager is Captain Barber, a Conservative in politics, and a type of the handy man who comes after the pioneer and before civilisation. The company has constructed and is actually working on the Athabaska River two large and one small stern wheel steamer, which carry out a bi-weekly service between

Athabaska Landing and Mirror's Landing at the mouth of the Slave River, the latter some 72 miles distant, and a little east of north. A steamer service is also maintained between Athabaska Landing and Grand Rapids, 163 miles north on the way to McMurray.

MIRROR'S LANDING

As far as Mirror's Landing travelling is easy, and leaving soon after 8 p.m. on board the "Midnight Sun," we pushed along up stream with a fine moon until 10 p.m., when we tied up until daybreak next morning. Halting at 9 a.m. for wood, we beat up stream all day against a strong current until 7 p.m., when we arrived at Mirror's Landing, at the mouth of Slave River, on which for a distance of eighteen miles a series of small rapids and shallows makes navigation impossible for ordinary steamers. The banks of the Athabaska are thickly wooded with aspen and spruce, and there is a fringe inland of from half a mile to two miles in depth of heavier timber, fine spruce, some two and even two and a half feet thick at the stump. Although the country further north has so far been little explored, I heard of a few farms and many vast stretches of good open land lying between belts and clumps of willow and small aspen. On the south side beyond the timber belt there is a certain amount of swampy land, part of a long narrow belt of muskeg which runs from east to west as far as the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, making it difficult for travellers to reach the Peace or Grande Prairie districts otherwise than by the route we followed, except when all is frozen.

As far as I could judge there is an almost unlimited quantity of excellent land within easy reach of the river, but in the new north-west there is such an abundance of absolutely first rate land that settlers refuse to look at any other, and their only difficulty, with such an enormous choice, is to make up their minds.

At Mirror's Landing is the end of the easy travelling. The great Athabaska River here turns nearly south towards Assiniboine, and our course now lay along the valley of its tributary, the Slave River, which drains the lesser Slave Lake into the Athabaska at this point.

The cargo from previous voyages of the "Midnight Sun" and from numerous scows lay piled upon the river bank awaiting removal by an altogether inadequate number of waggons which afford the only means of transport over the fourteen miles of appalling road to Norris Landing, where the Slave River becomes navigable. A certain number of scows are dragged by breeds up the eighteen miles of rapids, the navigation of which the

Provincial Government has recently attempted to improve by means of lumber wing-dams, intended to force the current to cut a deeper channel. On my return I came down these rapids in a scow with some twenty others under the guidance of Mr. Fred Lawrence, son of the Church of England Missionary who founded the Mission at Fort Vermilion, and now the Managing Director of the "Peace River Trading and Land Company."

The journey down was effected without difficulty in something under five hours, but a gang of breeds hauling a loaded scow cannot get up in less than three days.

The difficulties in the way of constructing a good road round appear to be so considerable, owing to the marshy nature of the ground, that, until the railway comes, Mr. Lawrence's scheme to improve the wing-dams and pass goods up on shallow low draught petrol steamers seems the best solution. Of course, during the winter months when water and land alike are frozen, steamers and scows lie up, but during two-thirds of the year the rivers constitute the natural highway.

I stayed the night at Mirror's Landing, waiting for the waggons, and had an interesting conversation with Bishop Grouard, the head of the Roman Catholic Mission in the North-West, whose residence is on the shores of Lake Athabaska, and whose diocese until recently included the Yukon.

Bishop Grouard, who is now over seventy years of age, came from France as a young man, and, with the exception of occasional visits to Europe, has been in the far north ever since. He appeared to enjoy remarkable health, and his vigour and enthusiasm were unabated.

I talked long also with a party of American farmers from North Dakota, who, having been deputed by a number of others to pay a visit of inspection to the Peace River district, had proceeded north from Ashcroft to Fort St. John and floated down the Peace on a raft, inspecting and making enquiries as they came. They had driven through Grande Prairie and Spirit River Prairie, and told me they liked the latter best of all. They reckoned, they told me, upon bringing out some two or three hundred families from the United States to settle in the spring.

NORRIS LANDING

Next morning we started with our personal effects on a waggon, and got through somehow over a trail which was only rendered passable in places by a corduroy pavement of logs over which we bumped and plunged to Norris Landing, where we found a strange and unspeakably filthy paddle steamer, the "Northern Light," of the Northern Transportation Company,

which plies between this point and Grouard at the north-west corner of the Lesser Slave Lake. From Norris Landing to Sawridge near the mouth of the Lake, the river is deep and navigable. The banks are low, and wide expanses of open prairie stretch far away into the distance. Everywhere is rich pasture, and here and there are stacks of hay which enterprising individuals have cut to be transported and sold at a high price as opportunity offers.

Ramshackle and foul as our steamer was, the squalid little cabins untouched throughout successive voyages, and the frames of the engines solemnly left loose to allow them to conform to the wobbling of the hull, she *steamed*, and was to some extent independent of the wind. Hitherto, for years, all through the summer, scows and York boats have been tracked by breeds along the banks of the winding river, and this has been the only means of communication for eight or nine months of the year. I tried to feel grateful to the "Northern Light," and to set the comparative rapidity of our progress against the half-cooked moose meat and black tea, the fleas and utter filth of our surroundings. On deck large embers flew continually from the funnel, and my hat was soon burned through.

After leaving Norris Landing we pushed along with the aid of a fine moon till 10 p.m. At daybreak next morning we got under weigh, and travelled through immense flats of luxuriant grass, until we came to Sawridge, where there is a post of the Hudson's Bay Company and a telegraph office. Almost immediately after leaving Sawridge we entered the lake, which from here to Grouard measures eighty miles. Early in the afternoon we passed through the "Narrows," where the Swan hills stood out twelve miles away to the south, behind the Swan River Prairie, where a number of settlers have recently located themselves. Parts of this district are timbered, but there are large stretches of prairie, with a quantity of beautiful grass, the "blue top," some of it six feet high. This blue grass grows upon the higher land, and does not usually flourish where the ground is low. The settlers burn off the stalks, after cutting what they want, and they have another crop in the spring.

Along the northern bank there is a heavy growth of poplar, from six to twelve inches in diameter, and of considerable height, besides some spruce.* Along the middle of the lake,

*About forty miles north, towards Whitefish Lake, are twenty miles of rolling prairie, which appear to have been cleared of poplar at some time by a big fire. The bunch grass here is excellent, and the whole of this is said to be good agricultural land.

the channel of the Slave River, there is plenty of water, and we made a successful passage, but all along the shore the water is extremely shallow, so that scows and York boats, when they cannot sail, must wait until the wind becomes favourable. If I had ever spent a week in a canoe, tied up with an adverse wind, I suppose I should have appreciated the "Northern Light" more highly, but words cannot express my satisfaction when, shortly after 10 p.m. we gently bumped, bows on, against the lumber bridge at Shaw's Point, a mile and a half from Grouard, and I was able to get on shore.

GROUARD.

This bridge, which has recently been constructed by the Provincial Government across the lake, has been of the greatest service in opening up the splendid country to the south; the pasture here is of an exceptionally high order, and little or no clearing is required. The end of the bridge, however, is situated at Shaw's Point, a mile and a half east of Grouard, and it is frequently a matter of considerable difficulty to get there. Passengers on foot going to and from the village sink deep into the mud at every step, in places above the knee, while waggon and " rigs " can only get through with difficulty. Public opinion was unanimous in desiring its transfer to a point exactly opposite the main street of the rapidly growing town. The level of the lake has evidently fallen in the process of time, and the position of the bridge probably marks the spot beyond which the "Northern Light" could not go, but a bridge is one thing, and a landing stage, which should presumably be built by the company, is another.

In a new country every facility for communication offered creates fresh requirements. Numbers of old-timers resident in the North-West took an entire summer in former days to get from Winnipeg to the Peace, and now we feel that we are wasting time and energy if we spend a fortnight on the journey. So, as more settlers pour in, the greater demand there is for better transport facilities, which, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of the Northern Transportation Company, are still inadequate. I understand that the "Peace River Trading and Land Company," pending the construction of the new railway, contemplates taking the matter in hand, running a regular service of steamers, as at present, between Athabasca and Mirror Landings, and dealing with the great congestion which occurs at the latter place on account of the difficulty of the portage road round the rapids, by means of powerful shallow draft petrol launches, say one for mails and passengers, and light luggage, and two for cargo. A suitable passenger and

mail steamer from the end of the rapids would make the journey as far as Grouard a matter of comfort, and the "Northern Light," after being scrubbed, repaired, and adapted, would be available for the permanent transportation of the heavy freight which is daily increasing and with which the existing arrangements are manifestly unable to deal.

This would meet the requirements of the moment, and stores, hardware, agricultural implements and groceries would come regularly and easily as far as Grouard without having to wait until the settler can go and bring them on his sleigh when the winter has set in.

The pioneers, old-timers, were satisfied to do without what seems to be indispensable to the people who are pouring in now.

Grouard, which takes its name from the Bishop whom I met at Mirror's Landing, is already a thriving village, stretching on both sides of the broad main street leading down to the shores of the lake. The Hudson's Bay, Revillon's, and the Peace River Trading and Land Company, locally known from their trade mark as the "Diamond P," each has a large and well-stocked store; there are several "hotels" and lodging houses, a doctor, a smithy, a large saw mill, a watchmaker, a Methodist Chapel, several private residences, and, at the extreme north end of the village, the Roman Catholic Mission with its large, double-storeyed school, monastery and church, extensive fields of wheat and oats, and a large garden full of wonderful cabbages, beets, lettuces, radishes, peas and potatoes, besides a quantity of flowers.

Beyond the Roman Catholic Mission are the barracks of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, a sub-division of the Athabaska Landing command, in charge of an officer, whose district extends as far as Fort Vermilion. The officer was away on inspection duty, and the post was in charge of Sergeant Adams, who was kind enough to explain the system which is responsible for a state of law and order which cannot be surpassed in any country in the world. Dr. Donald, the Government medical officer, and Indian agent, had been summoned to see a dying man a hundred miles away on the Peace River, but I was fortunate enough to enjoy his hospitality on my return, and to confirm the impressions I was forming as regards the marvellous fertility and salubrity of the north. The Indians, he told me, are gradually dying out. The "breeds" fill up the gap between the whites and the Indians, being excellent hunters and teamsters, but agriculture does not suit them, and, as the white settlers advance, the "breeds" retire towards the north. Notwithstanding their Scotch names and their Portuguese or Levantine appearance, the "breeds" take after

their mothers, always showing a disposition to become more Indian and less Canadian, but the Indian constitution, which has flourished so long amid primeval conditions, is undermined and ruined by contact with the west. The hunter, whose only shelter formerly was the teepée, now returns wet and exhausted from his expeditions in the forest to a crowded air-tight log hut, artificially heated by a large fire, or even a stove, and the germs which increase and multiply under these ideal conditions attack him when his vitality is at its lowest, and his lungs are best prepared to succumb to their assault.

The buffalo has disappeared, the pure blood Indians are few and far between, and the "breeds," as they say, just fill up the gap until the whites come in.

"Real estate" speculation has begun in Grouard, where town lots are already held for sale at considerable figures, but the bulk of the land up here being owned by the Government, is held at the disposal of homesteaders, comparatively few of whom have yet been in occupation long enough to obtain their patents, or freehold title deeds.

The soil round Grouard is particularly fine, as may be observed by the traveller the moment he sets out to walk. A layer of loam with which is mingled the decayed vegetation of thousands of years, rich in humus and nitrogen, covers a deep bed of blue clay. One cannot help wondering why so many settlers should wish to go another hundred miles to the Peace and Spirit River Prairies and beyond. They are going to Grande Prairie chiefly because for some time past they have believed that this will be the first to be connected by the railway, and otherwise the only explanation I could obtain was that near the Lesser Slave Lake there is a certain amount of clearing to be done in the first place, and secondly that even 100 miles north, where there are great expanses of open land, the frost takes hold much less than where there is forest all around.

The settlers, especially the men from Ontario and the United States, are practical men, and I believe they are right to go on at present, even at the cost of dragging their waggons through the mud from Grouard to Peace River Crossing.

THE PEACE RIVER TRAIL.

At Grouard we hired a waggon with the owner and a pair of cayuses or native horses, and with our blankets, a small "grip" each, a Tente d'abri lent by Sergeant Adams, a few cooking pots and some food, two rifles, a gun and the indispensable axe, we started on our way to Peace River Crossing. Four miles beyond the Police Barracks is the Church of England Mission which we passed as we wended our way along the edge

of the Buffalo Lake, and here, saying good-bye for the present to two-storeyed houses, gardens, and wheat fields, we plunged into the muddy trail which leads through the forest. This had been an exceptionally wet year, and the rain which was doing so much to lower the grade of the great wheat crop all over the western provinces, had turned the track into a morass.

We walked ourselves the greater part of the way, and, lightly as our waggon was loaded, the strain upon our team was terrible. Until recently the trail had been quite narrow, just sufficient for pack horses. Now the poplars, tamarack and spruce had been cut back far enough to allow large waggons to pass, but the sun and the wind got little opportunity of drying up the mud, while the rain fell more heavily upon the roadway than on the ground protected by the trees.

Further, there had been a vast amount of traffic all this summer. The trail was quite unfit for use, being a ploughed field at the best, and too frequently a bog.

It is earnestly to be hoped that a portion of the million dollars which the Sifton Government has recently proposed to spend on roads in the Province of Alberta, may be allotted to the Peace River Trail, and that a reliable official may be entrusted with the supervision of the work.

It was noticeable that, when here and there on rare occasions we came upon an open space, a bit of prairie, the road was comparatively sound, and our horses were for a minute or two induced to attempt a trot. It was evident that, in the absence of any possible kind of metal, the only way to improve this trail would be to widen it as far as funds would permit. Deep mud-holes can only be dealt with by corduroy bridges, which have already been constructed in several places, but I believe that the wider the trail, and the more the sun and wind can get to it, the better. The South Heart, which we crossed twice, was the largest river we encountered, but there were numerous small creeks all along the road.

The first two nights we pitched our tent, and the third we slept at Crooked Bridge. It was raining so heavily that our teamster wished to take advantage of the shelter of a log stable for his horses which were now completely exhausted, and we ourselves, with a number of others, put down our blankets on the floor of the hut of an Indian hunter whose numerous family was awaiting his return from an expedition after moose.

The highest point upon the road, about half way across, is 2,430 feet, and the plateau slopes very gradually down towards the bank of the Peace, the top of which stands at least 700 feet above the bed, which is itself 1,225 feet above the level of the sea.

When first the traveller arrives upon the top of the bank, he sees below him the fork or junction of the rapid and unnavigable Smoky River, which rushes like a torrent down its deep and narrow bed from beyond Grande Prairie in the south, and the mighty Peace, 1,700 feet wide at this point, and navigable for a distance of over 500 miles, from Hudson's Hope in the Rocky Mountains to the Chutes beyond Vermilion. The Hudson's Bay run their steamer regularly over the whole of this distance, and another between the Chutes and Athabasca Lake. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of this great highway through what is evidently destined to become one of the most valuable portions of the Canadian Continent.

THE CROSSING.

A winding track down the steep incline brings one to the "Crossing," where, besides the stores of the Hudson's Bay, Revillon's, and the "Peace River Trading and Land Company," there is a hotel, a post office, a telegraph office recently opened, a local telephone, a dozen or more houses of settlers, and the barracks of the Royal North-West Mounted Police. A large Government ferry, a raft with a railing round it, capable of carrying two or three waggons and a number of horses and men, is worked easily backwards and forwards by the current on the principle of the "flying bridge," and the operator appeared to be kept busy. There is a Board of Trade at the Crossing, consisting of thirty members, and an agricultural society has recently been formed.

From the Crossing the Peace runs nearly due north on the line of the 117th degree of longitude for a distance of 180 miles, then turns north-east some seventy miles further to Vermilion, latitude 58.4 degrees, which appears to be the most northerly point at which agriculture can be reasonably expected to be successful from a business point of view, though wheat has been harvested at Fort Simpson in latitude N. 61.8, and in a favourable season at Dawson City, latitude 64.

In evidence taken by a Select Committee of the Canadian Senate 1906-07, it was stated that the country north of Edmonton was quite as good a place to settle in as the Saskatchewan valley was twenty-five years ago, and is relatively in exactly the same position. The witness left Fort St. John on the Peace one spring, when grain was six or seven inches above the ground, and on arriving at Edmonton a month later, he found the crops in exactly the same stage of growth as those he had left at Fort St. John.

The father of the present manager of the Peace River Trading and Land Company, Mr. F. Lawrence, F.R.G.S., proceeded to

the Peace River from Montreal in 1879 as a missionary, and immediately devoted himself to the task of endeavouring to make the missions and Indian schools throughout the northern country self-sustaining. His efforts were crowned with such success that his son decided to devote himself to agriculture as a business, with the result that not only is the wheat supply grown and milled at Fort Vermilion to-day in latitude 58° 4' sufficient for all requirements (the roller mill at Vermilion has a capacity of thirty-five barrels a day) but its quality has become celebrated throughout the world. Wheat grown on the Peace won first place at the World's Columbia Exhibition of 1893. Ladoga wheat, originally introduced from Eastern Canada, has until recently been exclusively grown, but latterly Red Fife wheat has matured in eighty-six days, and has given equally good results.

FORT VERMILION.

Between the Crossing and Fort Vermilion, as the river runs north and east, the banks become lower, until at Wolverine Point, 200 miles downstream, the banks are not more than 200 feet in height, and from thence to Vermilion they gradually become lower.

Large flats along the banks of this northern part of the river are covered with extraordinarily rich alluvial soil, and for years it was supposed that cultivation must be limited to these areas, but experience has shown that this is by no means the case. While the whole of the country on both banks between the Crossing and Fort Vermilion is not equally adapted for growing wheat, parts of it being low and swampy, there are immense expanses of bench or table lands, evidently of great fertility, sometimes stretching back 100 miles to the foot of the mountains.

At Vermilion marvellous potatoes are grown, cabbages weighing 18½ lbs., and turnips weighing from 18 to 25 lbs.

In an experience of twenty years' farming at Vermilion, the maximum yield of wheat per acre has been 66 bushels, and the lowest 5½. There has never been a complete failure. The heads of wheat at Fort Vermilion are sometimes six inches long, and have been found to contain as much as sixty-five kernels each.

Labour is too scarce to admit of raising fruit from seeds, but wild gooseberries, raspberries, currants and cranberries grow in abundance.

Cattle must be fed for upwards of three months during the winter, but otherwise look after themselves. The coyotes (wolves) make sheep impossible. Cayuses (native horses) look after themselves throughout the year.

The climate at Vermilion appears to be much the same as

that of Edmonton, but there is possibly rather a greater degree of cold and less storm. Winter in the Lower Peace district, sets in early in November, and the first frost may usually be looked for about the 1st of September. The more the country is cleared and cleaned the less the frost appears to be felt.

The season is backward as compared with that of Southern Alberta, the average time for seeding at Vermilion being 26th April as compared with the middle of April in the Upper Peace. The harvest commences early in August. But winter wheat appears to have the greatest future. The frozen ground is covered by a plentiful fall of snow, which ensures sufficient moisture to give the seed a start in spring. Winter wheat of the best quality has matured by the 18th July, fully two weeks earlier than spring wheat. The Dominion Government has recently allotted an annual subvention to an experimental farm which is achieving good results under its capable director, an old Barnardo boy, and a herd of pedigree cattle was on the way up from Grouard at the time.

The Hudson's Bay has a fine establishment at Vermilion, including a sawmill and carpenters' shops, where really first-class furniture and requisites of every kind are made. Revillon's and the "Peace River Trading and Land Co., " have their stores, the Roman Catholic and English Church Missions have excellent schools, which are self-supporting, and meet the requirements of the colony of 600 people, white and half-breeds, and the Dominion flag flies over the barracks of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

Indications of an extensive coal area are abundant on the north bank of the river, and twenty-five miles below the Crossing, at Tar Island, is an apparently inexhaustible supply of tar, which oozes freely from the source, and which has been used by the inhabitants from all time.

The Hudson Bay Company steamer runs down from the Crossing to Vermilion in from one to two days, according to the strength of the current, returning in from three to six days.

As I have already indicated, the home-seeker does not mind how far he goes, if he can obtain land which requires little or no clearing, but the settlement at Fort Vermilion owes its origin to the Hudson's Bay Company, whose employés and their descendants and others who have been induced to join them have gradually built up the flourishing colony we find to-day.

THE SHAFTESBURY SETTLEMENT.

Between Vermilion and the Crossing there is no permanent cultivation at present, and the next important wheat growing district we come to is the Shaftesbury Settlement on the north

bank, which commences almost opposite Peace River Crossing. The north bank of the river for some twenty miles in this direction does not rise up straight from the water's edge as elsewhere, but forms first a long range of flats, not more than thirty feet above the flood level, and varying from two hundred to two thousand yards in width. The whole of these flats are occupied, the land being clear, and freer from early frosts than the plateau on the top.

One of the first of the homesteads we came to was that of a farmer who was a blacksmith as well, and whose services were greatly in request for shoeing horses and repairing waggons. The telegraph line was being extended from the Crossing as far as Dunvegan, and here we met Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, originally an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had come to Canada from Dingwall over fifty years ago, and was now retired upon a pension, and farming his land. The homesteads of his sons and their families lay up the river next to his own, and we stayed the night at his house.

So interesting were Mackenzie's stories of "the dim past," that we prevailed upon him to substitute his own waggon and team for ours, which we paid off, and take us on to Dunvegan and the Spirit River Prairie. Two and a half miles travelling along a capital trail brought us to the Roman Catholic Mission Station, consisting of an imposing church, a large school, monastery, and dwellings for the staff, a saw mill, extensive farm buildings, and a real farmyard.

Adjoining was an area of over a hundred acres under wheat and oats, all safely cut and standing in the stooks. The quality of the grain which was absolutely uninjured by the early frosts—it was now the 15th September—left nothing to be desired. The wheat and oats were what I had been led to expect, but the garden produce was simply astonishing. No mere "old-timers," pioneers or half-breeds could show anything like this, which Mackenzie aptly described as a "business outfit." The French fathers who are in charge of the Mission are competent and up-to-date in all their methods. One of them, who has only been in Canada a couple of years, is an expert gardener from the South of France.

In conversation with the average pioneer one has the impression that their life is strenuous to a degree. Certainly they enjoy a minimum of comfort, according to our ideas, but there is a wide difference between our ideas and those of men who thirty to fifty years ago left crofters' cottages in the west of Scotland or the Orkneys, married Indian wives who have presented them with numerous families of half-breeds, and have had no incentive, in the absence of any kind of market, to do more than is sufficient

to supply their needs. They are hardy fellows, these old-timers, and we have much to thank them for, but the day of the pioneers is coming to an end ; they have had all the kicks, and now they are to have none of the halfpence which will accrue to the "business outfits" which are hustling in to settle up the country.

If anyone has any doubt about what really can be done in the Peace River district, I recommend him to come and inspect this Mission settlement in August or September, and see what knowledge, business methods and industry can do.

I saw ripe tomatoes (the "early jewel" species) measuring four inches across, good beets, gigantic turnips, weighing up to 19½ lbs. Melons of a sweet, small kind, such as grow in the South of France, ripe Indian corn, cucumbers, two of which together weighed 3 lbs., Brunswick cabbages, 22, 23, 25 lbs. in weight, and measuring 13 and 14 inches across the heart ; 6 carrots weighed 11½ lbs. ; one giant gourd weighed 43 lbs., and half a dozen onions 5 lbs. It was all very surprising, but, as the Fathers said, there is no mystery whatever about it ; the deep clay sub-soil with its surface stratum of black loam, rich in humus and nitrogen, the snow which provides the early moisture for the autumn wheat, and then the ample rainfall in the spring, with the *long spell of sunshine throughout the summer* more than compensate for the late and early frosts between which the crops have to be matured. What the priests are doing others can do, but they must work on similar lines. They must "get up early," or they will continually be the victims of what the old-timers call exceptional years.

Beyond the Catholic Mission comes the homestead of Mr. T. A. Brick, son of the late Rev. J. G. Brick, who was the original founder of the English Church Mission at the Shaftesbury Settlement. Mr. Brick, who was the first member for the Peace River district, in the Alberta Provincial Parliament, in 1906, has farmed here for twenty-two years, and has ever known a failure of his crop. The years are not all alike, but on an average he found that in every five years there would be two bumper crops, two medium, and one poor.

I stayed two days under Mr. Brick's hospitable roof, and availed myself of the facilities he offered for getting an insight into local conditions.

Mr. Brick farms upon a more extensive scale than most of the settlers. Originally in possession of a free grant of 160 acres held previous to the Indian Treaty of 1899, he owns 160 acres more, which he has "homesteaded" in the usual way, and has a similar homestead of 160 acres in the name of each of his sons. He finds it best to leave at least half his land fallow every year, and, until recently, the lack of a market has prohibited

his cultivating more than a small proportion of his property.

Since last year, however, quite a considerable local demand has arisen owing to the constantly increasing influx of settlers, who are compelled to buy until their own crops can be harvested, and he showed me 170 acres of prime wheat and oats, all cut and standing in the stocks. His wheat averaged from 20 to as high as 50 bushels to the acre. Forty acres of what I saw he believed would come up to the latter standard.

Besides his own reapers and binders, Mr. Brick owns a steam threshing machine and a mill, so he finds it most profitable usually to sell his wheat, after grinding it as flour, at 2½ dollars per bushel of 34 lbs., and keep the offal for his own purposes. His oats, which weigh up to 50 lbs., and sometimes up to 60 lbs. per bushel, averaging between 45 and 50 bushels to the acre, are sold by weight, at 1½ dollars per bushel of 34 lbs.

The late Rev. J. G. Brick it was who took the Gold Medal for wheat at the World's Fair, Chicago, in 1893, with his "No. 1 Hard," and it was presumptuous for me to think of making a suggestion to a man of such experience as his son. But when he told me that early drought was his chief enemy, and that he ploughed and sowed between 15th and 20th April, I could not help feeling convinced of the advantage of autumn sowing, which, besides gaining time, possesses the immense advantage of getting the benefit of the moisture of the melting snow deep down below the surface, at the moment when it is most required.

There is any quantity of wild hay, which can be obtained for the trouble of cutting and carrying, and sells at 20 dollars a ton.

During my stay at Mr. Brick's, I paid two visits to the English Church Mission, about twenty minutes' walk to the west. The Rev. C. Holmes, a Westmorland man, who is in charge, is a practical farmer as well as a divine, setting an example of honest work throughout the week, while his wife, assisted by another lady, directs the mission school. The life of a clergyman and his wife in this district is as varied as it is busy. The parish, though not very populous as yet, is of immense extent, entailing long and solitary drives across the prairie in all weathers by day or night. Besides his services at the Mission Church, he has his weekly service at the Crossing. His wife, in addition to the school, must needs perform the whole of the household work, for there are no nurses and no servants in the Peace Country, and every minute that can be spared by the minister must be devoted to the farm and the kitchen garden, where he is farmer, labourer, and gardener as well. I was glad to see that the English Church Mission, like that of the Roman Catholics, is a "business outfit," setting a temporal as well as a spiritual example to the members of its congregation.

I had a pleasant meeting at the Mission with an old comrade, Alexander Kennedy, a half-breed Indian, who had served as a Canadian Voyageur, while I was a very young subaltern in command of a company in the Nile Expedition for the relief of General Gordon in 1884. We spent some time recalling our experiences in Upper Egypt; these half-breed Indians were the pick of the voyageurs, who were by no means all of the same calibre. Kennedy was no longer young, but his splendid physique left no doubt as to the power of endurance which he had formerly possessed. It was believed that nothing could tire him. On one occasion he ran on foot from Mackenzie's house to the Crossing, and in to Grouard, a distance of over eighty miles, between 3.15 a.m. and 4.15 p.m., danced all night, and ran next day a further distance of seventy-five miles. He made little of all this, however. He said men were harder then than they are now, and he dwelt upon his experiences in Egypt, more especially the reception of the Voyageurs by the Army of Occupation on their return to Cairo.

Further up, beyond the English Mission, lies the farm of Mr. W. H. Carson, the Government local agent for free homesteads, who has been here for eleven years, and during that time has never had a failure of his crop. This year he has only about fifty acres harvested, all Red Fife wheat and American Banner oats. Mr. Carson operates a steam engine which turns a threshing machine, a saw mill, and grinds grain. He has five and twenty head of cattle, some of which will dress over 1,000 lbs., and which are fed on straw and local grasses. Hogs, too, have been successful, and the bacon has found a ready demand. Through Mr. Carson's land runs a good-sized creek down into the Peace, and this is the end of the Shaftesbury Settlement flats:

THE TABLE LAND.

It had been raining heavily, so next morning we were glad to avail ourselves of the assistance of Mr. Holmes' fine pair of horses to help our own to drag our waggon up the hill on to the plateau, upon which our road to Dunvegan now lay. Five hundred feet up we reached a wide expanse of prairie, mostly open, with occasional coppices and belts of light willow and aspen. Due north was Bear Lake, and the White Mud hills stood out some twenty miles away upon our right.

Splendid soil wherever we went, but, with the exception of a few stacks of wild hay, no signs of humanity, until, about 2 p.m., we arrived at Mrs. Eaton's homestead at Cold Springs, so called from a particularly fine creek which runs through this property. The crops had done well here, the few cattle I saw were in splendid condition, and a couple of hours were profitably passed

in conversation with Mrs. Eaton and her sons, whose success in this new district will be the means of attracting many others in the near future.

After leaving Cold Springs we drove through rich prairie, still more open than we had seen as yet, with only just enough light timber, poplar and willow to vary the landscape, which was bounded by the Rabbit hills, twelve to fifteen miles distant on our right, and the Birch hills, lying far to the south of the Peace River trough, now some six to eight miles on our left.

The drizzling rain had begun to make us think about a fire, when a half-breed cantered up on his cayuse and greeted us. As the friends of Alexander Mackenzie we were the friends of everyone, so the half-breed, who was the brother of the Police interpreter at Grouard, and whose home was on the bank of the Burnt River, where we contemplated camping for the night, galloped on to prepare his hut for our reception.

It was raining heavily and quite dark when we crossed the log bridge and pulled up in front of a hut which Mackenzie assured us was that of his friend.

There was evidently a glorious fire inside, and we pushed in with our blankets, to find that this hut had been abandoned for some time in favour of another on the other bank, which our friend was busy getting ready for us while he had hurried off his mother, his wife, his sisters and their children to camp for the night in this, the old one. The ladies were highly amused at our mistake, and kindly urged us to make the best of it, which we did. The fire was too good to leave, but at first it appeared as if the big wooden platform which served as a bed for the entire family was absolutely the only dry place in the room, the rain dripping through the roof in all directions. A prolonged inspection, however, resulted in our locating two narrow strips of ground under the central beam which were comparatively dry, and on which we laid down our blankets, in spite of the persistent invitations to change places with the occupants of the bed. We had shot some prairie chickens during the day, and, after these had been disposed of, sat smoking our pipes over the fire, while Mackenzie conversed in Cree with our hostess and translated for our edification.

Six miles on from Burnt River we went out of our road to visit a new settlement on the right of the trail. This homesteader, who had not been on the land a year, had put down half an acre in cabbages, carrots, turnips, lettuce, beet and onions, all of which were in good order. He had intended to build his house close to his garden, but was unsuccessful with his well, which he abandoned after digging to a depth of sixty feet, and finally located himself half a mile further on, where he

found a plentiful supply of good water, and was now busily engaged in turning over his land before the frost came. At noon we stopped for an hour at the "Water Hole," a depression which is said to always hold water, and close to which a new settler named Dawson, from Ontario, has just selected a homestead. He was still camping with his family in a small temporary shack, and in the "caboose" or canvas house erected upon the sleigh which had brought them out across the snow. He was busy breaking land before the frost should come, and then intended to get to work upon his house.

It is no child's play this homesteading. The newcomer, with his wife and family to provide for, and no one to rely on except himself, is, as they say, "up against it," and must use his head as well as his hands. During the afternoon we saw the makings of three more new homesteads, all that was being done by latest arrivals being to turn the sod and get the grain in. They themselves would board elsewhere until perhaps by the end of the winter they would get their houses ready for occupation. These settlers had found good water at a depth of twelve feet below the surface of the plateau, which averages here some 1900 feet above the level of the sea. Late in the afternoon we arrived at the edge of a large gully leading down to the river, and there, six hundred feet below us, lay Dunvegan.

DUNVEGAN.

The name was familiar, and I expected to find something more like Athabaska Landing or Grouard in size, but Dunvegan can show little except possibilities at present, for, notwithstanding its seeming importance upon the map, the total number of houses is exactly four. The Hudson's Bay station, in charge of Mr. Bateson, is the largest, then Revillon's store, the house of the ferryman, who operates a large Government ferry like that at the Crossing, and the homestead of one settler, Duncan Macdonald.

Except in the gully, there are no flats here. There is no room for more than residences and gardens down below, but on the top there are miles of land, the same as we had been travelling through the last few days.

Everywhere on this north side of the river the timber is light and there is an abundant growth of buffalo grass. The buffalo used to select their pasture as the Hudson Bay Company chose their posts. Wherever the buffalo roamed in the olden time the land is found to be the best, and, as the old Hudson Bay Trading post of Fort Garry has developed within the space of thirty years into the city of Winnipeg, so, as the West is opened up, each successive post becomes the germ of a great town.

Mr. Bateson's garden produce was almost equal to that of the Catholic Mission. Finer potatoes I never saw, and four of his onions weighed six pounds.

The Canadian Northern, which, it is now announced, intends to pass through Grande Prairie, may some day find it worth their while to run a branch to tap the Peace. If they do, they will probably select a place at which it will be possible for them to cross to the northern bank at some future time, and the trough-like canon, whose banks at the top are from two to three miles apart, and from six to seven hundred feet above the water level makes this a difficult problem. As a matter of fact, it seems, that there are only three places between Vermilion and the Rocky Mountains where a solution could be found. The first is at the Peace River Crossing, and this is not ideal; the second is at Dunvegan, where upon the southern side there is a long sloping gully corresponding to the one we came down, and the third, and far the best, is at Hudson's Hope, 150 miles up stream, where two high islands stand up like ready made piers for a cantilever bridge. With a waterway like the Peace already existing, it does not seem probable that the Canadian Northern or even the Canadian Pacific will consider it worth its while to go beyond. Everything could be brought by water to the point at which the railway tapped the river on the south. Still, when we think how the country has gradually opened up towards the north already, it seems only reasonable to suppose that future possibilities will not be ignored.

Laying down our blankets at Dunvegan, in a roomy annexe of the Hudson Bay Post, we dined with Mr. and Mrs. Bateson in their comfortable house, where we enjoyed our temporary dispensation from cooking and washing up almost as much as an excellent meal.

SPIRIT RIVER PRAIRIE.

From Dunvegan to the Spirit River Prairie is an easy day's journey, and, crossing the river with our waggon and horses at 10 a.m., we found a surveyor with a party of chainmen engaged in plotting out the forest on the southern bank, as town lots. The surveyor was naturally reticent, but I gathered that he was employed by a syndicate which had purchased a considerable acreage on this bank for sale in lots in anticipation of the railway. A profitable speculation if the railway comes here, but I should imagine that it would be easier at the present time to dispose of these lots to persons who buy "on the map" than to people who have been on the spot. The main gully down which it is believed to be possible that the railway might come winds up towards the south and east, while our trail for the Spirit

'River bent south-west up a branch ravine, a steep and slippery climb of about 600 feet on foot, through a heavy jungle of poplar and jack pine until we reached the top. Here there was a small extent of open ground, but very soon thick timber again until, about three hours' journey from the ferry, the open ground, the beginning of the Spirit River Prairie is reached. The story of the Spirit River (Chipai Sipi in the Cree language) is that once upon a time, in the dim past, a party of Indians were sitting round their camp fire, when one of them struck the dog of another who strongly resented it. The maiden to whom he was betrothed said that if he was a man, he would kill the assailant of his dog. A fierce fight then ensued, in which everyone gradually joined until hundreds were slain, and the survivors of the defeated fled south to Calgary, where their descendants, the Sirsi Indians still reside. The Northern Lights, which are frequently seen in the Spirit River Prairie are believed to be the ghosts of the warriors killed in this big fight.

In the forest, as we came up from the Ferry, all the land appeared to be first rate and only required clearing, but the fringe of the open country was of inferior quality, undulating, and marshy in the bottoms. In a very short time, however, excellent land was reached, with numerous large stacks of hay. Here and there coppices of poplar and aspen, enough for cover and all requirements, but plenty of open country between. The first homestead we came to was that of the Brothers Espen, who have been here since 1903. They had a good crop of oats in stooks, and further on wheat and barley, part cut and part still standing. The latter would probably be utilised as fodder for their animals, of which they owned forty head of cattle and fourteen horses. Last year, 1910, they sowed their wheat on 4th April and cut on 29th August. Their first oats were grown on 12th April, and the harvest began on 29th August. A stalk of Messrs. Espen's oats measured 5 feet 10 inches.

The whole of Messrs. Espen's land has now been enclosed by a strong fence. Beyond this farm we passed other good crops, and shortly before sunset arrived at the homestead of Mr. Charles Bremner, who left the Orkneys twenty-seven years ago to serve with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort St. John. While in the Company's service, Mr. Bremner, who has always been fond of horses and is a good rider, came to Spirit River to look after a quantity of horses belonging to the Company, which had been imported from America *via* Kamloops into this district, where they ran wild throughout the year and did extremely well. The Company then had a quantity of cattle too, polled Angus, imported from Scotland, and Herefords from the East. The cattle, Mr. Bremner told me, were coralled

and only fed with hay, during the coldest season, "rustling" like his horses at all other times.

On retiring from the service of the Company, fifteen years ago, Mr. Bremner was the first to set up as a farmer on his own account on the banks of the Spirit River.

He has a practically unlimited range of prairie for his stock, which consists of 200 head of cattle and 50 horses, besides 160 acres free grant, and 160 acres homestead, only 40 acres of which were under cultivation. There were thirty-five acres of wheat in stooks, and fifteen acres of oats still standing, which latter measured five feet six inches in height, and which I was assured would yield upwards of a hundred bushels to the acre.

Father Georges, of the Roman Catholic Mission, who has been here since 1903, is confident as regards the future of this district. A highly educated Frenchman from France, not yet middle aged, and speaking the Cree language like a native, he is extremely popular with all denominations, and some anxiety was felt owing to a rumour of his impending transfer.

The existing settlement is all on or near the river, as the supply of water from wells has so far not been altogether satisfactory. One well gave good water at a depth of twelve feet, and in another direction water was not found eighty feet below the surface.

It is difficult to estimate the cultivable area, but as far as I could judge, there is something like seven miles by eight of really first class land on which no clearing is required. The soil is a light loam, with clay subsoil, and no rock. It is extremely fertile, but it is only now that the arrival of new settlers is beginning to make it worth the while of the old timers to grow more than is required for themselves.

Outside the above mentioned area, which is being taken up first, there is an enormous extent of good land which only needs clearing. On the east, the Birch hills, 2,300 feet high, form the boundary; on the west there is a wooded plateau with an elevation of 2,500 feet, while to the south the country is thickly wooded where the trail passes through to Beaver Lodge, the centre of Grande Prairie, some forty-five miles distant.

I found that, besides the Hudson Bay Post, Revillon's Store, the "Diamond P," and the Catholic Mission, there were twenty-two homesteaders in all, of whom about half a dozen are recent arrivals.

Grande Prairie has attracted most of the newcomers so far, owing to the fact that the new Grand Trunk Pacific railroad takes them as far as Edson, whence during the winter there is a trail of only a little more than 200 miles to Beaver Lodge. Once the winter breaks, however, the Edson trail becomes prac-

tically impassable, and persons who have let the opportunity slip are forced to go round by the Peace and the Spirit River.

It has always, moreover, been hoped that, as has now been officially announced, a railroad will run from Edmonton direct to Grande Prairie in the near future.

Homesteaders in the latter district look for a substantial rise in the value of their property, and there seems to be no reason to suppose they will be disappointed. From all accounts the Spirit River country is the better of the two, but it is not of much commercial value as long as communications remain as they are to-day.

I did not go on to Grande Prairie. There was no means of getting back until the frost set in, except by the way I had come, and this would have taken too long. I had obtained, however, an insight into the nature and the possibilities of the Peace River country and the Spirit River, which latter will not fail to benefit by the improved communications as soon as the railroad passes through Grande Prairie.

It was now the 19th September, and there was a light fall of snow in the early morning, the first I had seen in Canada. It was cold, but fine, and I turned my horses' heads towards home with regret, but with the knowledge that in this new North Land there is more than plenty of the finest country in the world, just waiting for as many self-reliant, enterprising men as may be sensible enough to come and take advantage of their opportunities.

"My advice to people in the Old Country," said Mr. Bremner, "is this: if you have already got a good home of your own, keep it, but if you have not, come out here and make one."

RETURN JOURNEY.

I spent two nights at Dunvegan on my return, and saying good-bye to my friend Alexander Mackenzie, who drove back to his farm alone, we left one afternoon on board a log raft, which we purchased from the ferryman for five dollars, in order to have an opportunity of seeing the river bed on our return journey to the Crossing.

Our ship, which was constructed out of nine logs tied together, measured eighteen feet long by eight feet wide. Our little police tent was stretched across one end, there was a space in the middle to work a pair of heavy oars when necessary, and then a mud and stone fireplace on which we kept a big fire burning always. At night we tied up to the bank and collected fuel. Travelling all day in a leisurely but easy fashion at the speed of the current, and only using the oars at times, we arrived in front of the barracks of the Royal North-West

Mounted Police at Peace River Crossing after two nights out, and twenty hours actual travelling. There was really nothing to be seen from the river, which is very similar above to what it is below the Crossing, *viz.*, the bottom of a trough-like depression with steep sloping banks, except throughout the twenty miles extent of the Shaftesbury Flats.

If ten days could have been spared it had been our intention to run down about thirty miles to near Tar Island with some Indian hunters, Ackerman and his son, to try for moose which were reported to be plentiful a day or two inland from the river, but time pressed, and after spending two nights under the hospitable roof of Staff Sergeant Anderson, we set off with a half-breed, Adolphus Hudson, in an empty waggon which had brought out freight for the "Diamond P." Company on our return to Grouard. It was colder now, and the road had not improved, but, travelling comfortably this time with a powerful team, we spent only two nights on the road, the first at Crooked Bridge, in the Indian hut where we had slept on our way up, and the second we slept in the waggon near Bear Creek, arriving at Grouard the following evening.

The "Northern Light" was advertised to sail on the 27th, and we had two nights to stay at Grouard, where, Ferguson's boarding house being full, we slept on the floor the first night, and got the beds of two men who "pulled out" for Vermilion on the second. It was bright and sunny now, but we were told that it had been raining practically ever since we left. Starting at 9 a.m. on the "Northern Light," we arrived at Sawridge on the east end of the lake at 10 p.m., and next day about noon we disembarked at Norris' Landing. I accepted the invitation of Mr. Fred Lawrence to accompany him with about twenty others in one of his Company's scows, which was lying empty, down the rapids to Mirror's Landing, and, pushing off at 1 p.m. with our baggage, we arrived safely at our destination, eighteen miles by water and fourteen by land, shortly before 6 p.m., after navigating thirty very mild rapids, none of which ran faster than eight miles an hour.

The wing-dams constructed by the Provincial Government had evidently been "scamped"—supervision of contract work in such remote regions is undoubtedly difficult—and "graft" is the trouble; but I have no doubt that if our scow, measuring fifty by fourteen feet, and manned by a crowd of unskilled passengers, could come straight down without the slightest mishap, *serious* wing-dams made to really turn the current into a single channel, instead of imposing looking constructions practically lying on the top of the water, would easily enable powerful shallow draft steamers to pass up and down as required.

When I was there the prospect of a railway seemed remote, but now the Premier's programme includes (item 2) the construction of a railway from Athabaska Landing to Peace River Crossing.

We passed the night in the store at Mirror's Landing on the floor, seventeen of us in one room, and more in another. The new and smaller steamer of the Northern Transportation Company arrived at 11 a.m. next day, and we left in the afternoon for Athabaska Landing, where we arrived the following morning at 11 a.m. Engaging a rig and pair of horses we got as far as "Whiteley's" the first night, "Mrs. Snow's" the second, and arrived at Edmonton with our horses beat and in pouring rain early in the afternoon. After a few days spent in Edmonton, four nights in the train took me down to Montreal, where I embarked on board the Allan steamer "Victorian" for England.

OBJECT OF THIS PAMPHLET.

I have taken the trouble to record my experiences in the hope that I may succeed in conveying to the minds of others, who have not had an opportunity of seeing even what I have seen, some impressions of the possibilities of the Canadian North-West.

Many a stout young fellow in the "Old Country," as they call it over there, must feel hopeless about his future. My object is to set him thinking. Why stay and starve in England where dozens are waiting for every vacancy, when he can go to Canada, which is crying aloud for people of the right sort, and is ready to make to each a present of 160 acres?

After spending more than half my life in various countries abroad, I am perhaps especially struck by the futility of clinging to a doctrine which has had its day, and which is no longer applicable to the conditions of the world in which we live. The masses appear to consider nothing but the labels outside the bottles and take no notice of what they contain. As trades-unionists they go to any length to protect themselves against their employers, and then, as free traders, they indignantly refuse to protect their country or their work.

Drugged with Limehouse and other street-corner rhetoric, opiates in the shape of doles, promises of "Christmas boxes" and "rare refreshing fruit," the crowd of destitutes upon the Embankment goes on increasing, while work seems more and more impossible to get.

When Bismarck laid the foundations of a scheme of social reform which took thirty years to build, he began by establishing a protective tariff upon imports which came into competition with home products, while here, in fewer months than Germany has taken years, we are endeavouring to build the upper

storeys without any foundation at all.

The trades-unionist, who is clear enough upon the subject of the importance of protecting himself against his employer, refuses to have anything to do with protecting his *employment*. There he stops, whereas as long as we are the only people who practice what is called "free trade," we simply deny our workmen equal opportunities with those of other countries who prosper at our expense.

In Canada men seem to think for themselves, not to be guided by catch words. Here in London I have heard a vast assemblage of clerks and shop assistants shouting, to the tune of "Marching through Georgia":

"The Land, the Land, 'twas God who gave the Land,

"The Land, The Land, The Land on which we stand,

"Why should we be beggars with the ballot in our hand,

"God gave the Land to the People!"

In Canada people flock to the land because it pays. Here they leave it because it does not.

In North-West Canada practically every man is a land owner, or intends to become one. No man will work for another permanently, but only for just so long as suits his own convenience.

Ask any one you meet if he would go back to the Old Country, and he will laugh. A Scotchman observed to me: "A man must either be a millionaire or a gillie over there."

"Canada has done her part, and it's up to the Old Country now." It has been said that it takes three generations to convince the English. A few talk in the first, a few listen and begin to think in the second, and possibly something may happen in the third. We must hope that it will not really take three generations for the Old Country to wake up. Mr. Asquith tells us that "Protection is the greatest imposture of modern times" and that "the flight of capital is the greatest proof of the nation's prosperity." Canada thinks differently; she accepts every penny of capital she can get, and Mr. Bonar Law, a Canadian born, who possesses the advantage of being himself convinced of the truth of what he preaches, may ultimately succeed in convincing the people, who "want work not charity," that they are busy using their power to cut their own throats.

The forest of misunderstanding and mis-statement, however, is so dense that the process of letting daylight through to the minds of the voters must take time, and, while I do not ask my countrymen to leave a sinking ship, I do implore them to remember that these islands are only a parish of the Empire, any part of which may be our Home. "What is my country? The Empire is my country, — is my Home!"

When I came to live in London, I found that the rates and taxes of my particular borough were abnormally high, and, having found a house in another which would suit me equally well, I migrated. These islands, I repeat, are just a borough or parish of our country, the headquarters and seat of the Imperial Government, but otherwise no more to the Empire to-day than Ottawa is to Canada. The men who at present are handling the parish pump pronounce Protection to be "the greatest imposture of modern times," whereas throughout the rest of the civilized world, including our Dominions across the seas, Protection, whether naval, military, fiscal or social, is regarded as elementary common sense.

And all the time, while the parish pump is turning out People's Budgets, Old Age Pensions, Veto Bill, Labour Bureaux, and even the Insurance Bill, the struggle for life gets fiercer, jobs are less easy to get, and if once a man gets out, it becomes harder and harder to get in. The number of the hopeless goes on growing like a snow ball, and my advice to those who are wondering when the "Golden Age" is going to materialise is to see, before it gets too late, what their prospects would be in Canada.

I do not recommend anyone to go unless he is strong and ready to work. Further, no man should attempt to strike out alone in the New North West until he has gained experience of local conditions on an established farm within reach of civilization, where he will be paid according to the value of his work until he is capable of taking up a homestead of his own.

My advice to those who, after reading this, feel that they would like to hear more, is to consult one of the under-mentioned Agents of the Canadian Government in the United Kingdom, who will, *without charge*, gladly give, either personally or by letter, full details regarding any point upon which the intending emigrant desires information:—

ENGLAND:—

Mr. J. McLellan, 48, Lord Street, Liverpool.

Mr. J. K. Millar, 139, Corporation Street, Birmingham.

Mr. A. F. Jury, 81, Queen Street, Exeter.

Mr. L. Burnett, 16, Parliament Street, York.

SCOTLAND:—

Mr. Malcolm McIntyre, 107, Hope Street, Glasgow.

Mr. W. B. Cumming, 26, Guild Street, Aberdeen.

IRELAND :—

Mr. John Webster, 17-19, Victoria Street, Belfast.
Mr. Edward O'Kelly, 44, Dawson Street, Dublin.

OR

Mr. J. Obed Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Emigration,
11-12, Charing Cross, London, S.W.

Farmers, Farm Labourers, and Female Domestic Servants are the only people whom the Canadian Government Immigration Department advises to go to Canada. Capitalists who will be content to leave their capital at home for at least six months may go with confidence, but all others should obtain definite assurance of employment in Canada before leaving home, and have money enough to support them for a time in case of disappointment.

The best time to reach Canada is the beginning of April.

